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Pesticides Registration



**HOW IT
PROTECTS
YOU**



PA-835

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Pesticides offer us a convenient, effective, and economical way to fight pests in our homes and gardens. They help protect our health, forests, and outdoor recreation areas. And they must be used if farmers are to produce enough food and fiber to supply an ever-increasing population.

Despite their obvious advantages, most pesticides have poisonous properties. Used carelessly or recklessly, they can harm the user and those around him, leave residues in our food and feed supply, or endanger wildlife. We can continue to enjoy the benefits of pesticides and minimize their potential danger by taking advantage of the built-in protection provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's registration process.





HOW ARE YOU PROTECTED?

Federal law requires that all pesticide products be registered with USDA before they can be marketed in interstate commerce. Before registering the product, the Department requires the manufacturer to provide scientific evidence that the product (1) will be effective against the pest or pests listed on the label and (2) will not injure humans, crops, livestock, and wildlife when used as directed. Authority for this consumer-user protection is provided by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act administered by the Pesticides Regulation Division of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

USDA scientists give primary consideration to the safety of users and consumers when setting the rigid standards that pesticide products must meet before they are accepted for registration.

Once an application for registration is submitted to the Pesticides Regulation Division, the scientific staff begins an exhaustive review of supporting evidence provided by the manufacturer. Pertinent information available from other sources is also considered.

The Division's pharmacology and toxicology staff review proposed uses of pesticide formulations to determine whether or not such uses would be hazardous to our health and if such hazards can be avoided. Chemists review the application from the

standpoint of the chemical composition and the compatibility of the mixture. They also evaluate the scientific data supporting the manufacturer's claims about the amounts and duration of any residues resulting from the use of a pesticide.

Entomologists, weed control specialists, bacteriologists, plant pathologists and physiologists, nematologists, and animal biologists study the application from the standpoint of their particular areas of competence. They determine how effective a pesticide would be against the pests listed on the label—and whether or not the product would cause unwanted side effects.

If the review staff decides that the product would be useful and can be used safely when directions are carefully followed, the product may then be registered.

WHAT ABOUT RESIDUE TOLERANCES?

As additional protection, pesticides to be used on food and feed crops must meet special requirements for registration. Such pesticide cannot be registered until the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has determined how much residue—if any—can safely be permitted to remain on food or feed crops. FDA must otherwise determine if a product can be exempted from this requirement. Pesticides must be very low in toxicity, however, to be exempted from tolerance requirements. Pesticides used in a way not involving food or feed do not require a tolerance.

In requesting FDA to establish a permissible residue level, the applicant must submit suitable scientific data on the toxicity of a chemical and the amount of residue likely to result from its use. On the basis of this and other available information, FDA determines how much residue—if any—may be permitted. USDA will not register the product until satisfied that any residue will not exceed the level established by FDA.

Although responsible for the registration of pesticides, USDA officials consult with and seek the advice of experts at other Federal agencies to further insure that the public interest is fully protected. USDA routinely refers pesticide labels to the Public Health Service, for example, for the formal opinions of health authorities. Applications involving proposed outdoor uses of pesticides are referred to the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of Interior for review and comment about the possible adverse

effects of the pesticide on fish and wildlife. The opinions of such agencies are considered fully before USDA officials decide on a registration application.

HOW ARE STANDARDS ENFORCED?

USDA carries out enforcement activities to make sure that pesticide products being marketed interstate continue to meet the standards required for registration and sale. Pesticides Regulation Division inspectors located at strategic points throughout the United States collect samples of pesticides and send them to a USDA laboratory for testing. USDA scientists analyze these samples with highly sensitive equipment to make sure the product contains all the ingredients in the amounts listed on the label and that the product is not adulterated with chemicals or other materials not listed on the label.

USDA scientists also make laboratory and field tests on a regular basis to check the effectiveness of registered pesticide products. And they conduct pharmacological tests to see that safety precautions continue to be adequate.

If a product is found to be misrepresented or faulty in any way, appropriate actions are taken to correct the situation. In a minor violation, an informal notice to the company may be sufficient. More serious violations may result in a formal notice of violation, seizure of the company's goods, or even prosecution of the violator. Registration for a product may be suspended or cancelled at any time if necessary to protect the public interest.

WHAT PRODUCTS ARE REGISTERED?

More than 60,000 products made from one or more of 900 chemical compounds are currently registered by USDA. Of these, farmers use pesticides to fight harmful weeds, insects, plant diseases, and other pests attacking their livestock and food crops; plant regulators to produce seedless fruits and vegetables and to prevent premature dropping of fruit; and plant defoliants and desiccants to cause leaves to drop or plants to mature uniformly so that mechanical harvesting can be used more efficiently.

Although farmers use by far the largest volume of the pesticides produced in this country, approximately half of the pesticide products registered by USDA are designed for nonfarm uses around or in homes, apartment buildings, and industrial plants.

Industrial uses of chemical products registered as pesticides are quite varied. For example, manufacturers use chemical pesticides against fungi in literally thousands of products ranging from asphalt, paint, and plastics to jet fuel. Other pesticides are used by industry to make such products longer lasting and more attractive to consumers.

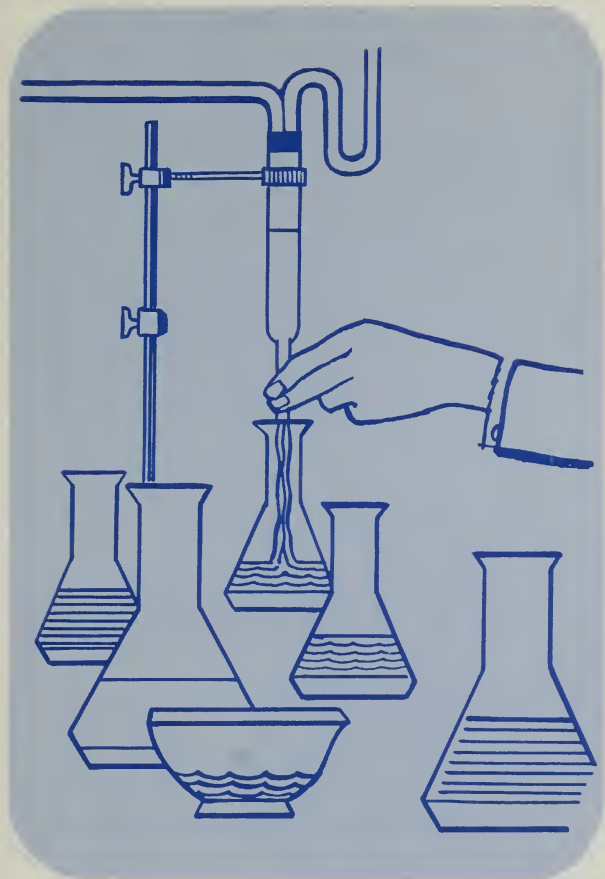
All sterilizing, disinfecting, sanitizing, germicidal, and bacteria killing chemicals—except those sold exclusively for use on or in the living body of man or other animals—are classified as “pesticides” and must be registered with USDA. These include products to sterilize and disinfect surgical and dental instruments, barber shop and beauty parlor instruments and equipment, dairy equipment, and such restaurant equipment as dishes and glasses.

Homeowners and apartment dwellers alike use pesticides practically every day. The housewife fights such insects as roaches and ants with pesticides; she combats mildew and other fungi in clothing with fungicides; and she applies detergent-sanitizers in her laundry and antibacterial sprays in her bathrooms and kitchens to keep them sanitary and clean smelling.

Homeowners regularly use insecticides on their lawns, rose bushes, and other ornamentals to protect them against insects. They also apply fungicides on lawns to control grass diseases and herbicides on lawns, driveways, and other areas to control weeds. All of these types of chemicals are registered by USDA.

ARE SAFEGUARDS BEING TIGHTENED?

Regulatory safeguards are protecting the public against adverse effects of pesticides. For example, the Food and Drug Administration takes regular market-basket samples of food from five geographic regions representing the entire United States. These samples show that the quantity of pesticides in the



American diet is insignificant from a health standpoint. Pesticide residues found in the test samples are, in fact, generally less than one percent of the allowable levels of pesticide residue.

In addition, USDA's nationwide monitoring studies show that pesticides are not accumulating in soil, water, or the atmosphere to any great extent. In areas where monitoring work uncovers localized buildup of a pesticide, USDA immediately recommends changes in practices to correct the situation.

In spite of this good record, USDA is continuing to improve its protective services to the public. For example, USDA is requiring—on an increasing scale—that registrants provide evidence on the persistence and fate of pesticides once they have been applied. Also pesticide labels and patterns of use are being continuously reappraised—and modified—in the light of new information. The Pesticides Regulation Division will continue to tighten its registration and enforcement procedures so that any questionable registrations or use patterns are corrected or cancelled promptly to assure that the public continues to receive maximum protection.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

You can protect yourself, your family, and your neighbors by following these rules:

1. Read the label on a pesticide product before buying the product. Make sure that the label bears the USDA registration number and that the pesticide is recommended for the particular pest you want to control.
2. Follow label instructions and use the pesticide only at the time, place, amount, and purpose recommended on the label.
3. When using a pesticide outdoors, apply it when there is little or no wind.
4. If you spill a pesticide on skin or clothing, wash with soap and water and change clothing immediately.
5. Store pesticides in closed, original, or well-labeled containers where children or pets cannot reach them. Do not store pesticides near food, feed, seed, or where they might be mistaken for a harmless chemical.
6. Wrap empty pesticide containers or unwanted pesticides in heavy layers of newspapers and put them in the trash can. If trash collection service is not available, dispose of containers at a sanitary land-fill dump, or bury them at least 18 inches deep in a level, isolated place where they will not contaminate water supplies.



Use Pesticides Safely
FOLLOW THE LABEL

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